

## **LNCT 2019 Vaccine Hesitancy Workshop, Geneva**

### **Transcript: Interview with Svetlana Grigoryan, Armenia**

**- Could you please tell us about vaccine hesitancy in Armenia?**

**Svetlana Grigoryan:**

-Yes, for the past several years there has been an increase in the vaccine hesitancy rate in Armenia, which has led to a decrease in general vaccine coverage. Consequently, it was decided that it is necessary to look into this issue and understand what affects people's decisions. Together with WHO Armenia implemented the project Tailoring Immunization Program, to understand all the factors that have an impact on parents and people's decision to make vaccination or not to make vaccination. As part of this project...the project started in 2017 and lasted until 2018. As part of this project a workshop was held, which covered all the stakeholders. It was found out during the workshop that the medical workers have the biggest impact on the vaccination process. As we found out these are the medical workers who do not take part in the vaccination process, these are narrow specialists. Most of the time they advise not to vaccinate. After that as a result of the analysis, this was for the first time in Armenia, in this quality, qualitative analysis, to identify all the factors that have an impact on the behavior of medical workers, ...for, at... This analysis was made through conducting interviews. A big volume of work was done to collect the interviews because it was difficult to find the medical workers, who would agree to become an interviewer. There were 30 interviews conducted, mainly at the place of their work, in which neonatologists, pediatricians, neuropathologists, allergologists, those narrow specialists to whom the parents apply, were involved. And as a result of this analysis, it was found out that three key groups of factors effects medical workers' behavior – this is the ability, this is motivation, ability and motivation and mmm... ability, motivation, I do not know...the ability and motivation and opportunities. Among the abilities, it was noted that the medical workers, who do not take part in the immunization process, do not have basic...basic data on immunization, basic knowledge on immunization and this hampers them to give advice to parents whether to vaccinate or not to vaccinate (their children)

**- Please, tell me which steps have you taken to deal with these problems?**

**SG:**

- Based on the information we have obtained, regarding whether this is vicinal... not vicinal but vaccine hesitancy, it was decided to conduct many trainings, training courses for medical workers, and not only medical workers but during the academic education process as well – both as part of the bachelor's study programs and the postgraduate study programs, and for the purpose a letter was prepared and sent to the Ministry of Education with the request to incorporate a separate immunization course to provide basic immunization data, basic knowledge on immunization in all higher educational institutions, other institutions where specialists are prepared, this implies training and education of medical workers

**-- Please, tell us what kind of advice you would give to other countries**

**SG:**

- I think this is the same advice – the training of medical workers, initially it should be understood that medical workers effect the vaccination process whether they advise (to vaccinate) or not, if they have the same situation as we have in Armenia, I would advise to train and train medical workers.

**- Thank you very much!**